

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A gaming machine comprising:
  - a variable display section for variably displaying a plurality of types of symbols required for gaming;
  - a starting device for starting variable display of the symbols;
  - a stopping device for stopping the symbols being variably displayed;
  - a profit provision device for providing a player with profits if a combination of symbols constitutes a predetermined winning mode when the symbols are stopped and displayed;
  - an image display device for displaying information about a game;
  - a sound generation device for generating a sound relevant to a game; and
  - a control device for electrically controlling the variable display section, the starting device, the stopping device, the profit provision device, the image display device, and the sound generation device on the basis of a hierarchical processing structure, the control device including:

a main control device for controlling a first hierarchical level, which is a highest hierarchical processing level of the gaming machine,

an intermediate control device for controlling a second hierarchical level situated lower than the first hierarchical level, under control of the main control device, and

a lower control device for controlling a third hierarchical level situated lower than the second hierarchical level, under control of the intermediate control device.

2. (currently amended) The gaming machine according to claim 1, wherein the main control device performs processing for making a decision pertaining to the player's profits;

the lower control device controls an image display to be performed by the image display device; and

the intermediate control device performs control operations other than those to be performed by the lower control device.

3. (original) The gaming machine according to claim 2, wherein the intermediate control device performs control operations including a sound generation control operation to be performed by the sound generation device.

4. (previously presented) The gaming machine according to claim 1, wherein the intermediate control device is controlled in accordance with a command code transmitted from the main control

device, and the lower control device is controlled in accordance with a command code transmitted from the intermediate control device.

5. (original) The gaming machine according to claim 1, wherein the lower control device comprises a plurality of control boards specialized for specific control processing operations.

6. (previously presented) The gaming machine according to claim 5, wherein the lower control device is equipped with a lamp control board.

7. (original) the gaming machine according to claim 2, wherein the lower control device comprises a plurality of control boards specialized for specific control processing operations.

8. (previously presented) The gaming machine according to claim 7, wherein the lower control device is equipped with a control board having mounted thereon at least an image control CPU and character ROM.

9. (original) A gaming machine comprising:

variable display means for variably displaying a plurality of types of symbols required for gaming;

starting means for starting variable display of the symbols;

stopping means for stopping the symbols being variably displayed;

profit provision means for providing a player with profits if a combination of symbols constitutes a predetermined winning mode when the symbols are stopped and displayed;

image display means for displaying information about a game;

sound generation means for generating a sound relevant to a game; and

control means for electrically controlling the variable display means, the starting means, the stopping means, the profit provision means, the image display means, and the sound generation means on a basis of a hierarchical processing structure, the control means including

main control means for controlling a first hierarchical level, which is a highest hierarchical processing level of the gaming machine,

intermediate control means for controlling a second hierarchical level situated lower than the first hierarchical level, under control of the main control means, and

lower control means for controlling a third hierarchical level situated lower than the second hierarchical level, under control of the intermediate control means.

10. (new) A gaming machine according to claim 1, wherein communication between the main control, intermediate control and lower control devices is only one way, namely from the main

control device to the intermediate control device and from the intermediate control device to the lower control device.

11. (new) A gaming machine according to claim 1, wherein the lower control device controls an image display to be displayed on the image display device.

12. (new) A gaming machine according to claim 1, wherein the gaming machine has a plurality of data terminals.

13. (new) A gaming machine according to claim 12, wherein there are eight data terminals.